



## **CO-LOCATION: THE NEXT STEP CAREERS SERVICE**

### **EXPERIENCES SO FAR: PREPARING FOR THE NATIONAL CAREERS SERVICE**

BASED UPON A CAREERS ENGLAND MEMBERSHIP SURVEY ©CAREERS ENGLAND & PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 2012

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#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Careers England is the trade association for employer organisations involved in the provision of products and services promoting careers education and guidance in England. It is the only association of specialist career guidance businesses in the Country.

From its perspective as the informed employer voice of careers guidance businesses, Careers England's strategic direction majors upon advocacy of the economic and social benefits of careers information, advice and guidance to the health of the nation - together with articulating the need for an effective strategic framework for careers advice and guidance provision for people of all ages across England.

On 29<sup>th</sup> November 2011, the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) presented a paper to update the National Careers Service (NCS) Advisory Group<sup>1</sup> *'on current and planned activity to increase the level of co-location of careers guidance services with other services up to and after the National Careers Service is launched, and seek the Group's views about where further*

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<sup>1</sup> (2011) *Co-location of the National Careers Service*.NCS-AG05-05 Skills Funding Agency. Paul Chubb of Careers England serves on the NCS AG and reported this SFA paper to the CE Board in December 2011.

*enhancements to co-located activity could be made’.*

**This led Careers England to commission Leigh Henderson (of CoHesion Career Development Consultancy) to report on its members’ experiences thus far in establishing co-location of Next Step Careers Services with other agencies - including JCP, Further Education colleges and other community organisations.**

Careers England (CE) asked its members (who are the majority of the current Next Step prime contractors) 14 questions as in the questionnaire attached in Appendix 1.

*Please note that whilst not all of the members of CE are involved in Next Step, throughout this report the phrase “CE Members” refers to those responding to this survey. Since its aim is to look to the future, the use of the term NCS in this report includes the current Next Step Careers Service.*

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## 2. Learning Points from Careers England members' Co-location Experience

The detailed evidence related to co-location of the Next Step Careers Service, from the perspective of Careers England members from our survey, is presented in the main report. We summarise here the learning points (majoring upon Jobcentre Plus, but referring to other locations too) that we have identified:

### 2.1 Jobcentre Plus (JCP): issues to address

- 2.1.1 Shared targets and key performance indicators are required as part of a strategy to deliver coherent services to clients.
- 2.1.2 Inconsistency of resources and responses between Jobcentres within regions is a barrier to delivering consistent careers service support.

- 2.1.3 Differences in culture and organisational focus should be mutually understood at the outset; the closer the cultural match, the easier it is to establish sustainable co-location.
- 2.1.4 Appointment of staff responsible for facilitating the process, including apprentice information officers, at team or client level is beneficial;
- 2.1.5 JCP staff need to be aware of all elements and channels of the careers service, including the less structured nature of the services Next Step offers.
- 2.1.6 In order for the host and provider to share an understanding of the careers service offer – and how it relates to the host’s own service offer – training, observation and/or joint staff meetings are required.
- 2.1.7 Data should be shared between JCP and the careers service on an equal partner basis in the interests of delivering a coherent service where clients do not have to repeat basic information after referral.
- 2.1.8 The presentation of co-located services in a Jobcentre should make clear their interrelationship to clients and stakeholders.
- 2.1.9 Adequate resources are required for private interviews to fulfil the careers service specification and Ofsted expectation of “quiet and confidential interview space”.
- 2.1.10 There should be access on co-location sites to the two other channels of the Next Step Careers Service i.e. telephone and the Internet.

## 2.2 Further education colleges

- 2.2.1 Wide regional differences in Next Step/FE co-location exist, depending on whether FE colleges are Next Step subcontractors. Even where that is the case, there are examples, such as One Stop shops under the Pathfinder activities, of continuing collaboration and co-location with client service as a joint, rather than competitive, enterprise.
- 2.2.2 The career guidance service delivery landscape in some FE colleges appears to be inconsistent (and potentially confusing to the public). Ad hoc mixes exist of career guidance delivery to students under 18 (including by Careers England members) and FE Next Step sub contract delivery within some colleges – looking ahead this needs careful review.

## 2.3 National Probation Service and Prisons

Positive examples of co-location between Next Step and the National Probation Service (NPS) were reported. However there were significant outstanding issues to address:

- 2.3.1 The differing needs and cultures of the two organisations slowed down the process of establishing an effective partnership.
- 2.3.2 Non-attendance of clients was a *'huge'* problem.
- 2.3.3 Pressure on NPS staff militated against them gaining an understanding of the Next Step culture and service offer. Nevertheless Careers England members felt that it was worth persevering to provide disadvantaged clients with the Next Step service, including labour market information.
- 2.3.4 Uncertainties over the Next Step offer in prisons may undermine the strong co-location activities in many prisons.

## 2.4 Other organisations

- 2.4.1 Co-locations with other organisations - including adult education centres, libraries and community organisations – frequently had longer histories of collaboration than those with JCP and any cultural differences and resource requirements were better understood in general.
- 2.4.2 There was some evidence that co-locations on employers' premises were successful as clients were motivated to attend. It should be noted however that these arrangements were self-selecting on the basis that employers concerned understood the benefits of having the Next Step Careers Service on their premises.

## 2.5 Policy and funding

- 2.5.1 The current funding model disadvantages rural communities as Next Step contractors are driven to maximise numbers seen, usually through co-location arrangements with JCP.
- 2.5.2 There is recognition that further increases in registered unemployment will increase pressures on JCP and may reduce its capacity to host other agencies, especially Next Step contractors.

### 3 Which co-location models work best and with which agencies?

Whilst it is not yet clear which co-location models work best, there is clear evidence on principles for success and evidence too of barriers to progress.

#### 3.1 Range of sites

3.1.1 **Jobcentres** were the most frequently mentioned co-location sites in the CE survey, but Connexions centres (where they still exist), district council offices, libraries, community centres, Sure Start Centres, National Probation Service offices and employers were also prominently reported.

3.1.2 Several members reported a high level of collaboration with JCP. For example: *'Over 75% of our customer referrals come from JCP across the region. Currently Next Step advisers are located in 62 out of 65 Jobcentres working at a local level to deliver a tailored service based on the Jobcentre's requirements.'*

3.1.3 The focus on co-location with JCP is understandable; Ministers want it and the Next Step funding regime means that it makes sense for contractors; but this may prove to be at the expense of rural and other outreach activities.

#### 3.2 Geographic factors

3.2.1 CE members serving rural areas report difficulties in keeping sites open over an extended period, creating a dilemma in serving communities when quantity is a major element of contracts.

#### 3.3 Jobcentre Plus

3.3.1 Despite significant resource having been devoted by the SFA and JCP to the co-location project, there are a range of difficulties in different places. One member reported that in one area, no Next Step representatives have been allowed to visit JCP whereas elsewhere in the same DWP region, all JCP managers have been visited by Next Step overcoming *'all manner of barriers'*.

3.3.2 Another member observed that DWP regional and district managers have a great deal of autonomy, making it difficult to achieve consistency of co-location arrangements.

- 3.3.3 Several members reported that a combination of ‘top down’ and ‘bottom up’ discussions worked best. They recognised that organisations such as JCP, already under significant pressure from high unemployment and claim rates, can have difficulty with providing facilities quickly to new partner agencies using their relatively centralised procedures.
- 3.3.4 Several members reported that, in some cases, JCP staff find it difficult to relate to Next Step staff as their JCP processes are highly structured and target driven. That said, CE members stressed the importance of Next Step staff working hard at communicating effectively with JCP colleagues. Several made the point that careful selection of Next Step staff with positive attitudes and confident presentation skills was repaid in establishing positive collaboration with JCP teams. Referrals were more forthcoming when Next Step advisers attended JCP ‘buzz’ meetings ‘to explain their wares’.
- 3.3.5 Such messages are reinforced if JCP district managers understand the Next Step Service’s aims and objectives. CE members emphasised the need for regular and frequent contact at manager level as JCP personnel can move at short notice.
- 3.3.6 Higher footfall rates help establish collaboration as, in the case of one CE member with two ‘co-location’ pilots, full-time Next Step representation could be justified. Less regular arrangements can undermine establishing a familiar and clear process in the minds of JCP advisers. The same member found that the associated appointment of an apprentice information worker to the NCS team in a Jobcentre proved to be highly effective. Another member reported that, *‘The best example is JCP with whom we have invested a lot of time meeting with managers at different levels on a regular basis.’*
- 3.3.7 *‘The most successful in terms of engaging clients has been where the co-location is on a regular weekly basis’* another member reported. *‘Clients are able to work on action points and return knowing the same adviser will be available for an additional session. Similar success has been had with co-location in training agencies where an adviser has allocated times to be available to their clients – e.g. Thursday afternoon. We have arrangements for some form of co-location in [87% of the region’s] JCP Offices.’*
- 3.3.8 Even where full-time Next Step attendance is not justifiable, it is clear that regular attendance has clear benefits. One member reported that ‘...the

*locations also need to have a significant/regular footfall of eligible customers and the staff at the co-location need to be on board (i.e. they book people in, send reminders, explain the service’). However ‘...if the location is busy or hosting an event, a drop-in service can work but this is difficult to regulate and is not compatible with CRM. Appointments are preferable but difficult to manage if [‘did not attend’ (DNA)] is high as not contact time is unaffordable’.*

**3.3.9** Another member advised that, *‘Greater joined up working from a national and regional perspective would help to embed our positioning’*. This emphasises the need for the SFA, DWP and the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (DBIS) to communicate such messages consistently and constantly to the agencies involved at all levels.

**3.3.10** This is confirmed by a further member reported that, *‘The co-location model with JCP has been a great success; it has also had the most positive effect on clients. The formalised arrangement with JCP senior management ‘buy in’ has led to high volumes of client referral and access to JCP management has helped resolve issues where they have arisen. The co location service generally and the co location within [two JCP offices] has raised the profile of advice and guidance across DWP provision and made it an integral part of the DWP offer to clients.’* And, *‘We have co located in all JCP centres across [the city]’*.

**3.3.11** The same CE member opined that the conditions of receiving JSA for claimants raised questions about planning ahead to gain employment; issues that the NCS will be able to support.

## **3.4 FE Colleges**

Beyond JCP, Careers England members probably have greater experience in co-locating with FE colleges than any other category of agency. The survey confirmed the range and quality of relationships with FE colleges and the challenges that are emerging.

**3.4.1** Strong collaborations exist between the NCS and further education colleges across the country. There are, however, emerging issues concerning co-location links between NCS providers and some further education (FE) colleges. Some current Next Step providers are having difficulty in gaining access to some FE students in some colleges even where relationships are otherwise excellent. In such cases, the outcome is that students over the age of

19, including those on courses funded by SFA or DWP, do not have access to external impartial CIAG. This is an issue which needs to be reviewed nationally with DBIS and SFA.

- 3.4.2 CE members report a wide variety of links with FE colleges ranging from co-locations in most of their area to working alongside FE colleges that all have Next Step contracts in outreach settings only. In the latter case the CE member co-locates in Jobcentres alongside FE colleges Next Step teams – a scenario which will be interesting under the NCS.
- 3.4.3 Some excellent examples of good co-location practice including one college which links its own services of IAG and employability with Next Step services and the Job Centre Plus service. In other areas where FE colleges have their own Next Step contracts, there is no co-location on colleges' sites but they both co-locate on JCP sites on different day. Where FE colleges have their own Next Step contracts there can considerable competition between colleges themselves and with independent impartial Next Step providers. This extends to competing high street college shops.
- 3.4.4 Another member co-locates with some 15 FE colleges, and is particularly used at the end of courses to offer independent advice. They have a permanent stand in an FE "hub" alongside a range of providers and support services.
- 3.4.5 Using FE colleges as subcontractors brings its own management issues - in that the college must show that the advice they are offering is outside of the scope of their existing FE contract and provided in community locations and not on college premises.
- 3.4.6 Wide regional differences in Next Step/FE co-location exist, depending on whether FE colleges are Next Step subcontractors. Even where that is the case, there are examples, such as One Stop shops under the Pathfinder activities, of continuing collaboration and co-location with client service as a joint, rather than competitive, enterprise.
- 3.4.7 The career guidance service delivery landscape in some FE colleges appears to be inconsistent (and potentially confusing to the public) with ad hoc mixes of career guidance delivery to students under 18 (including by Careers England members) and FE Next Step sub contract delivery within some colleges – this needs careful review.

3.4.8 The positive engagement that CE members have with FE colleges is exemplified by these comments; *'We work directly with the majority of FE colleges in [our region], either through subcontracting arrangements or through negotiating delivery on site by one of our own advisers. The offer is tailored around the individual needs of the clients and includes 1:2:1 interviews and group workshops.'*

*We do not have a one model fits all approach. Some colleges do not want to be subcontractors of Next Step so we, as the Prime Contractor, would offer a service to all their eligible clients. Other colleges are subcontractors, but we also work in partnership with them due to the demand for the service and then there are colleges who are subcontractors and do all of the delivery.*

*Any issues are identified and addressed at the initial contracting and performance review stage and on the whole we all work well together.'*

### 3.5 Other agencies

Where comments were made on co-location with the **National Probation Service** (NPS), they were positive but high numbers of clients who 'did not attend' (DNA) was a problem and the pressures on probation staff militated against them gaining an understanding of the Next Step adviser role. If this can be overcome, there would be benefits in helping NPS clients to progress. Significant comments included:

3.5.1 *'Covering Probation Centres across [part of our area] has provided offender KPI groups opportunities for Next Step support and [to make] LMI information available';*

3.5.2 *'The co-located service has worked well with the Probation Service but took a while to come to terms with the differing need and culture of the organisation and client';*

3.5.3 Whilst only one member reported upon work in prisons, this was working well: *'Working with prisons across [our area] has been positive; clients are seen and referred to education as a mandatory progression into learning. Outcomes are achievable and sustained. The customer journey is continual with referrals to partnership agencies, i.e. NOMS/Probation.'*

3.5.4 Another CE member reported that co-location arrangements with **adult education centres** and **community organisations** had produced better service responses. It was easier to establish partnerships with such

organisations due, perhaps, to a longer history of collaborative action and a *'more closely aligned ethos'*.

3.5.5 Several members reported that delivery on **employers' premises** featured prominently in their delivery. One comment is illuminating: *'From our experience and reflecting the majority of our 'Next Step' interactions with customers, employers' premises work best, as usually clients are motivated to attend and we have negotiated directly with the employer for use of facilities and they 'buy in' to this as we are supporting their employee' often at a time when they are keen to show their employees that they are doing all they can to support them, e.g. during redundancy and transition periods such as succession planning and talent pool development. We have also developed strong links with JCP with regard to outplacement support (rapid response) for organisations and individual unemployment support.'*

### 3.6 Providing Facilities

3.6.1 An excellent summary of the need for adequate onsite facilities was this member's comment: *'For co-location to work under the new Next Step operating instructions the host organisation also needs to provide good internet access with printers etc. Lap-tops fill a gap but they are not really effective due to relying on remote 'dongle' internet access and even if there is access to secure Wifi/plug in internet, portable printers are unreliable and expensive to run and, due to data security, if the action plan is not issued to the client immediately the provider incurs unaffordable postage expense (Recorded delivery etc).'*

3.6.2 The long established procurement and branding processes in JCP have sometimes proved to be a barrier in establishing effective co-location arrangements. Basic processes such as providing desks and access to the internet can be challenging. It is acknowledged that SFA and JCP are working on these issues including introducing pods for Next Step providers in Jobcentres. And the evidence from this survey is clear - it is vital that these efforts continue at national strategic level.

## 4 Examples of where things work well, detailing the factors/actions that make this happen

4.1 Examples of success, given below, illustrate some important principles with invaluable insights from CE members.

- 4.2 Strong, effective working relationships where managers and staff are engaged in delivering a coherent service to claimants and other clients are axiomatic, as exemplified by this comment: *‘Relationships with management and individual adviser level [are important]. These relationships have taken some time to develop but [have been] worth the perseverance. JCP appointed Next Step champions and having this link has made things work well’.*
- 4.3 Taking time to clarify heads of agreement clearly pays dividends: *‘Where there is a formal arrangement like [with] JCP, the service works well. We have regular meetings, common/joint objectives and mutual understanding of client need. We have agreements with some providers where IAG is positioned as part of the service. For example, some Housing Associations make the IAG intervention part of the entry to housing. On entry and exit from some adult education courses, Family learning groups embarking on courses to gain employment.’*
- 4.4 Effective communication is the key: *‘Reasons for success are similar in all cases: strong, effective working relationships, in which both parties are ‘equal’ and where both managers and then staff appreciate the value of what we are doing, and where there are shared agendas. Clear communications & operational arrangements have also been very important. In education settings it is best if the Next Step activity can be built into the syllabus’.*
- 4.5 JCP featured prominently in all survey responses, though the underpinning principles were equally applicable in other settings. Indicators of success in Jobcentres include funding for branding, broadband and a Next Step ‘champion’, appointed from the Jobcentre team: *‘In 2 JCP centres we are, at SFA instigation, trialling ‘deepening co-location’. This involves a full-time Next Step Adviser presence and the provision of a discrete branded area. Funding for the branding and broadband installation as well as for a Next Step ‘Champion’ in these Jobcentres has contributed to the success of the trial. In these 2 JCP [offices] attendance at appointments is much improved on that in other JCP. The full-time presence is clearly a factor. In addition the free flow of information back to JCP referring advisers aids referrals and knowledge of outcomes’*
- 4.6 Integration into Jobcentre team activities, where relevant, is evidently proving to be of much importance: *‘Key to [partnership working] is Next Step Advisers being able to attend JCP [staff briefings/meetings] to communicate information and to share good practice’. ‘In JCP [offices] this has been supported by Next Step Advisers being co-located across a number of geographical areas, having the skills to provide customers*

*with information and guidance to make informed decisions based on excellent LMI knowledge.'*

- 4.7 CE members are beginning to piece together what success would look like in co-location, as captured by this response: *'Much of [the rest of] our 'Next Step' interactions are with customers in Job Centres. Where this works well is where customers have requested help and the Job Centre Adviser is well informed about the Next Step service and briefs the customer well beforehand. However, it is not always the case with JC+ customers. Some JC+ customers are only attending because they are told to and their benefits may be affected if not. This affects their active participation in some cases re the advice they are given.'*
- 4.8 Successful relationships take time to be established: *'.....these relationships [with JCP] have taken some time to develop but worth the perseverance. JCP appointed Next Step champions and having this link has made things work well'.*
- 4.9 One of the prominent challenges for Next Step providers is the mandation of clients to use their service and it will take time to build joint experience with JCP staff; *'With JCP, an additional factor in our success is the drive from government for the 2 agencies to work together. JCP [has] welcomed Next Step and changes like mandation to the service serve to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of what is on offer.'*
- 4.10 Several CE members have recognised that successful co-location requires appropriately skilled staff: *'Ensuring that Next Step advisers deployed in co-located centres had the skills to work effectively with colleagues from other agencies and to promote the Next Step service in a Jobcentre context. The same principle applies to all co-location activities'.*
- 4.11 It is clear that Next Step advisers must demonstrably add value to existing services on site, perhaps with a service menu integrated within the host agency's own, or alongside. One CE member reported that: *'...in one Jobcentre, Next Step is incorporated into an 8 week employability programme delivered by a number of providers. The success of this kind of activity is dependent on several factors including a close working relationship with the Jobcentre's management team, forward planning and pro-active approach by the Jobcentre, underpinned by the involvement of their staff.'* Another provided details of an extensive service menu, including executive support sessions, workshops for unemployed or at risk employees, pre retirement programmes and services for employers.

4.12 Experience is reinforcing the notion that NCS Advisers demonstrably need to work to professional standards and those of confidentiality/data protection in particular, especially within Jobcentres and National Probation Service sites.

4.13 In an interesting footnote to good practice related to co-location in Jobcentres, one member commented that, in cases where there is restricted access to the Internet and other information resources, it would be best not to pursue co-location. The clear conclusion is that co-location has to deliver sufficient resources to enable Next Step advisers to deliver a quality service.

#### 4.14 **Reviewing experiences with some other agencies**

4.14.1 *'In Probation Centres ..... Next Step Advisers work to professional standards to ensure confidentiality/data protection around supporting customers through disclosure.'*

4.14.2 *'In both Children and Sure Start Centres it is vital that Next Step Advisers add value and compliment those services already available to customers, acting as a signpost where necessary and to support customers with their goals both short and long term, particularly with those most distanced from the labour market.'*

4.14.3 *'Work based learning providers-co-location has been most effective where we have been building on pre-existing relationships with WBL Centre Managers.'*

4.14.4 *'In education settings it is best if the Next Step activity can be built into the syllabus.'*

4.14.5 *'Libraries- co-location is planned, but is not yet happening on a regular basis. We have however found the Library Service managers to be very positive about working with us, & we have high hopes for partnership work.'*

4.14.6 Adult and Community Education facilities and Libraries attract different clients.

## 5 Examples of non-typical co-locations which work well

- 5.1 CE members have amassed experience of co-location delivery in a very wide range of community and/or charitable organisations, including:
- 5.1.1 Adult education centres
  - 5.1.2 An Army garrison: where a liaison officer refers service personnel to the Next Step service as appropriate;
  - 5.1.3 Children's/Sure Start centres;
  - 5.1.4 Community centres;
  - 5.1.5 Employers' premises;
  - 5.1.6 Faith centres e.g. churches and mosques;
  - 5.1.7 Football club community projects;
  - 5.1.8 Housing Associations;
  - 5.1.9 Libraries;
  - 5.1.10 NHS rehabilitation centre;
  - 5.1.11 Pubs;
  - 5.1.12 Shopping centres;
  - 5.1.13 Working men's colleges.
- 5.2 Some of these examples are embryonic, such as co-locating with football club projects but, it is to be hoped that development will continue through the SFA community pathfinder projects.
- 5.3 The growing evidence is that it is frequently proving possible to deliver a truly integrated service in community/charitable organisations. In many cases the host organisation sees Next Step delivery as an extension of its own remit and often clients are identified and referred by them.
- 5.4 One member reported that at Adult Education and Sure Start centres, Next Step staff are able to tailor the delivery of IAG to the needs of the individual centres and their customers: *'Also by working in partnership we are able to influence the quality of the referrals and influence progression routes'*. In essence it is the local relationships and 'flavour' which make this delivery effective.
- 5.5 Another reported on work which had recently been undertaken with an organisation supporting homeless young people, which proved to be successful in engaging young people who had previously disengaged from traditional services. Taking the service to the customer made them more likely to engage with the service. The evidence is that

working on site with existing services can be particularly effective when case conference type meetings can take place to share and review customers' journeys.

## 6 Rural Outreach

- 6.1 A cause for some concern arising from this survey is that working in a wide range of centres is often not sustainable in rural areas. Arguably this is partly because of dispersed populations and footfall being insufficient for the Next Step provider to meet its contractual obligations; funding regimes exacerbate the potential problems. Sustainability is an important issue in the context of current SFA funded pathfinder activity.
- 6.2 Despite these concerns, CE members who are working in rural areas report that isolated communities have welcomed local delivery. Looking ahead to the NCS, the funding model will need to be reviewed in order to make rural outreach less difficult to maintain. Providers are looking to the SFA community delivery pilots to stimulate further developments.
- 6.3 Members report that much existing rural provision is delivered through sub-contractors including local community-based and/or charitable organisations that have expertise in working with their target groups. One member reported that it has link advisers working with Neighbourhood Learning Networks and is in discussion with a local council about working in rural locations. Another has delivered to rural communities alongside its current delivery to young people (although how sustainable this will be after the local authority loses duty for a universal careers service within Connexions is questionable).
- 6.4 Another member commented: *'The nature of the Next Step payment model does not lend itself to rural outreach well. We have tried various strategies to engage rural communities including co-locating on mobile library buses, however it is extremely difficult to make these attempts financially viable.'*
- 6.5 This survey response summed up the challenges and the dilemma caused by a constraining funding regime: *'Rural outreach is challenging as it is very difficult to deliver the Next Step service cost effectively without a guaranteed flow of customers, payment for the service being by session delivered. In rural areas this flow is usually hard to achieve. Where rural outreach takes place it is often the case that venues are used for a period of time but then the customer flow dries up so another venue is moved to. Because of the success of Next Step collocation in Jobcentres where the flow of customers is good and reliable and the finite budget of Next Step there has been a move away from rural delivery venues.'*

## 7 Concerns that inhibit effective co-location

- 7.1 Members report their concerns that the economic outlook and attendant pressures on funding and priorities mean that the policy priority for co-location will have to be considered.
- 7.2 It is axiomatic that organisations with different drivers and cultures will find it more difficult to align their services than those that have similar cultures. Overcoming major differences requires:
- 7.2.1 Positive management encouragement;
  - 7.2.2 Time;
  - 7.2.3 Communication at all levels over a period of time, especially addressing the different nature of the Next Step offer – notwithstanding that the aims may be similar.
- 7.3 Even where these are present, differing priorities for delivery staff can still inhibit progress, possibly unwittingly, through their focus on the particular priorities that they have been given. Examples include FE College staff charged with maximising student numbers and Jobcentre staff with stretching targets and an overriding need to get people off benefit.
- 7.4 Practical barriers such as lack of Internet connectivity and coping with the increased footfall that co-location brings need to be addressed.
- 7.5 Amongst potential forthcoming challenges to the success of co-location for the NCS must be the concerns that any expansion of Jobcentre staff cadres to cope with rising unemployment will undoubtedly place co-location projects under increased pressure.
- 7.6 Financial concerns are also increasing for CE members delivering current Next Step and the future NCS, with partners charging rent at market rates, and contract values stretched to cover such added costs.
- 7.7 One member provided this stark assessment of current and future challenges: *'JCP - Limitations on space, the need to provide constant updates to staff to promote and understand Next Step, competition with other programmes that have not been integrated into a coherent programme, access issues to internal parts of the building, restrictions on office opening hours especially for 9am appointments and minimising JCP customers returning for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>d</sup> sessions and problems with connectivity and IT.*

- 7.8 *The planned national recruitment of JCP advisers is expected to result in further limitations on space and awareness raising. We are concerned that this may result in Next Step advisers no longer having any space to deliver the service in 2012 / 13’.*
- 7.9 *The theme of challenges in addressing cultural differences is emphasised again: “the biggest concern and inhibitor of co-location has been different organisational cultures. This has been best illustrated by work with JCP and the Probation service where a lot of time had to be spent on aligning objectives. Understanding each others’ roles and outputs and particular client need. This was illustrated and addressed in JCP delivery where DNA/ FTA records are now scrutinised by joint teams and in the Probation Service where clients are affected by court orders’.*
- 7.10 *Another member explained the cultural differences in practical terms: ‘JCP advisers have failed to understand the relationship between careers advice, training recommendations and employment – they have placed emphasis only on employment outcomes and have often seen careers advice only in relation to aspiration. We have worked hard to remove these barriers with more success coming recently in the economic downturn.’*
- 7.11 *A further member provided this detailed analysis: ‘Effective co-location is only successful where there is complete commitment shown by respective stakeholders’ management and front line staff. We currently operate from several JCP locations and the effectiveness of each location is either positively or adversely affected by a multitude of factors/issues. Some challenges of working in JCP, including [the] Co-location Trial in [in our area] are:*
- 7.11.1 *Ability of JCP management to make physical changes to existing premises without encountering high levels of bureaucracy and associated costs e.g. desks, Interview Rooms, installing IT and signage*
- 7.11.2 *Effective communication and understanding of JCP Advisers regarding Next Step Service, channels and limitations e.g. production of CV’s and what can be realistically achieved in 3 face to face sessions. Another member reported that, ‘Even after communicating on many instances that Next Step is not a CV writing service, we still regularly get customers coming with expectation that it is what we offer, citing their JC+ Adviser as source of that expectation.’*
- 7.11.3 *Lack of access to reliable IT to use CRM and enable internet access. The installation of a Wifi network for Next Step Adviser use in one Pilot Jobcentre has still not been completed. Dongle enabled laptops are very unreliable or*

*impossible to use in rural locations and, one member reported that JCP IT systems may not be able to cope with Next Step connections. It would be more effective to provide Wifi connectivity.*

- 7.11.4 Physical location of Advisers in JCP can restrict effectiveness of delivery and ability to deliver group sessions. Security in JCP premises is very strict and customers cannot simply enter the building and walk to desks of NS Advisers. Room availability and booking processes are a constant challenge.*
- 7.11.5 One JCP office has restricted the access of our Advisers to desks and the replacement desk can no longer be booked in advance. We also have to compete with a number of other agencies for this desk. This makes planning delivery and meeting JCP customer needs extremely difficult. This internal decision did not consider co-location agenda.'*
- 7.12 Another member noted that: '...whilst JC+ staff are often very accommodating to our own staff, we have had many instances where there is not enough room to deliver the service. Occasions when service has had to stop because no room available. Also a room big enough to deliver workshops is very rarely available to Next Step Adviser at Job Centre as room is often at a premium for their own staff, not alone other agencies. In fact we have examples where we have provided rooms for JC+ to deliver their services on our premises.'*
- 7.13 Service delivery in a co-located setting can remain fractured:*

  - 7.13.1 'Customers having to 're-tell' their story as JCP staff have provided minimal data, e.g. 'Name', telephone number and simply 'CV' or 'SHC' so customer has to retell their story to next Step Adviser re current situation, past work experience etc';*
  - 7.13.2 'All aspects of communication, other than email are problematic with JCP staff. Roles, responsibilities and decision making powers of managers and individuals can be bewildering to external agencies. They are not always understood by their own staff either.'*
- 7.14 'Main JCP centres with suitable delivery environments serve the needs of customers of large geographical areas. Claimants/customers may not regularly travel to sign on because cost and time of travel is prohibitive.'*

- 7.15 *'Meeting health and safety regulations has been a concern in some sites especially Jobcentres' with an attendant impact on Next Step services.*
- 7.16 *'In non-collocation trial JCP offices establishing the Next Step brand is difficult. Advisers are moved location week to week (and often day-to-day) around the office which can include moving between floors'.*
- 7.17 There is concern about co-location in prisons from 1 August 2012. It is not clear how the NCS will integrate into the education and training delivery in prisons after SFA takes responsibility from NOMS. There could be significant implications when taking the criticality of physical positioning and access to resources in prisons into account.
- 7.18 One member commented that these barriers can result in low referral rates and attendance adding that: *'...we cannot afford to use valuable Next Step advisor resource in a venue that does not deliver a high number of customers when the contract is so target driven.'*

## **8 Measuring the impact of co-location on client progression**

- 8.1 There is currently no consistency in measuring impact across co-location settings. CE Members question whether SFA and DWP hold impact information that is not made available. This is an important issue to discuss with SFA and DWP colleagues at national level. Examples of how impact is being reviewed and measured by CE members include:
- 8.1.1 *'At present we are collecting and sharing data on referrals, interventions, DNAs and outcomes of Next Step follow ups. We have begun to discuss ways of [JCP] sharing outcomes of placements into employment. [JCP] are not measured on placing into learning';*
- 8.1.2 *'Customer feedback is sought at all face to face interventions using the Next Step customer feedback questionnaire';*
- 8.1.3 *'We are only keeping separate impact data for our official co-location project with JCP, which we collect on a monthly basis through our centralised booking system and data sharing with JCP. Formal client feedback has not yet been collected for this project as it has only been fully operational for a couple of months';*
- 8.1.4 *'We don't monitor feedback on co-location particularly; however we do monitor how easy it was for clients to find out about the service. In the co-location JCP*

*offices between August 2010 and April 2011, 95.5% of clients were at least satisfied with how easy it was. Between May 2011 and July 2011, 100% of clients were at least satisfied on how easy it was to find out about the service'.*

- 8.2 Attendance rates by mandated Jobcentre clients are a major concern: *'[Impact is measured by] subsequent interactions with customers [and] feedback forms and tracking services. For those JC+ customers who do attend subsequent interviews, we do see progression, but with attendance poor sometimes we are not always able to judge this. However [the] main contractor does collect data overall from their own follow up work. SFA and JCP should also be able to provide relevant information however this is not available.'*
- 8.3 *'In the 2 deepening co-location JCP offices in our area progression is being monitored separately but in other venues the task of measuring progression in one venue as against another is extremely lengthy and technically difficult and not cost effective so is not undertaken.'*
- 8.4 *'Following on from the work of the JCP co-location pilot, an agreement has followed to ensure the sharing of information and lists of those referred onto mandated provision by JCP Advisers is shared with Next Step Advisers and Information Adviser who then tracks customers and shares this info avoiding any duplication of work.'*
- 8.5 *'We are not yet specifically measuring the impact of co-location on progression. We have however developed case studies in relation to a project co-locating with a Sure Start centre.'*
- 8.6 *'Data sharing is difficult as CRM is unable to produce accurate reports and those which capture local flavour as it is difficult to manipulate the system to provide local reports as we have been able to do with previous MI systems. Data sharing also very restricted under new operating instructions. This in turn makes it more difficult to measure distance travelled.'*

## **9 How the service in JCP premises is enhanced to provide clients with the time and access to all 3 channels**

- 9.1 There is some notable good practice emerging in this area, for example:
  - 9.1.1 Information assistants have been employed to direct clients to the other two channels;
  - 9.1.2 An apprentice has been employed in the information role;

- 9.1.3 In two deepening co-location trial sites, dedicated phones have been provided for clients to use to contact the Helpline;
- 9.1.4 In other sites, the details of the other channels have been added to the client skills action plan;
- 9.1.5 In another case, information on the other two channels is included in a leaflet given out at first claim stage and personal advisers encouraged to provide information orally.

## 9.2 Members report that provision of signage in a timely manner can be problematic:

- 9.2.1 *'In the co location JCP centres in [in one area] there is an Information assistant who is employed to direct clients to use the dedicated helpline for 0800 100 900 or a PC to browse [www.direct.gov.uk/nextstep](http://www.direct.gov.uk/nextstep) The centres are branded separately as Next Step to differentiate from the existing JCP provision.'*
- 9.2.2 *'Marketing of the channels primarily takes place through the face to face service. There are a limited number of posters on view in Job Centres but Next Step Providers are restricted and must adhere to internal JCP policies and procedures. Signage and banners must be cleared and installed by JCP Estates Management Team.'*

## 9.3 Positive initiatives include:

- 9.3.1 *'Through the additional resource of a front line apprentice information worker who works alongside the Next Step adviser as well as the availability of dedicated IT and telephone resource';*
- 9.3.2 *'In both co-location trial JCP offices, one "hot phone" has been modified to dial directly to the telephone channel. In non trial locations the Next Step web address and telephone number are added to the clients SAP;*
- 9.3.3 *'Better knowledge of all advisers, new IT kiosks and information pods linked to web site. Posters etc';*
- 9.3.4 *'At our face to face interactions we explain all 3 channels to customers and how they can access them and the benefit/ service provision of each channel. Those without internet access or skills we support by either referring to relevant IT skills for life courses or computer access venues such as local libraries and local providers;'*

- 9.3.5 *'In the deepening co-location JCP there is a warm phone line to the telephone channel with posters/notices advertising it and access to the web. Advisers routinely refer to the telephone and web channel';*
- 9.3.6 *'By wherever possible ensuring that customer have the time and space to access the 3 channels. Customers seen at the JCP as part of the deepening co-location pilot are supported by the Next Step Information Adviser to access the services, particularly those with additional needs and encouraged to complete the Survey Monkey as part of [second/third round] sessions complementing the work of the Next Step Adviser';*
- 9.3.7 *'Next Step has encouraged JCP advisors to signpost customers to the 2 other channels if they feel the customer does not require a face to face intervention. For example, a leaflet was given at the first claim stage.'*

## **10 How separately funded services/offers for adults and young people are integrated and co-located**

- 10.1 Whilst the Next Step Careers Service is still delivered through the diminishing number of Connexions centres, there are concerns about the fragility of such arrangements following legislative changes through the Education Act 2011.
- 10.2 One member reported that it should still have fully integrated careers centres and so will seek to offer an integrated service. Others report that they work closely with other Next Step providers, including at major events such as the World Skills event in London in 2011. Another reported that staff see 16-24 year old clients that visit Jobcentres. Shared team delivery at a Sure Start Centre was commented upon by another. There is also evidence of collaboration between sub-contractors to provide services including redundancy support sessions:
- 10.2.1 *'The service is still delivered from some existing (but ever diminishing Connexions centres) centres where young people seek advice. It is also delivered to parents at Family Learning centres, extended schools and children's info service centres who sometimes bring along young people';*
- 10.2.2 *'The World Skills event at Excel London in November 2011 delivered advice to young people and adults but mostly with parents of young people';*
- 10.2.3 *'It is our intention to offer a limited service to young people through the Community Walk-in bid';*

10.2.4 *'We are working collaboratively with X (who also provide Next Step) and support delivery of Skills & Support for Redundancy sessions';*

10.2.5 *'We still have a network of Careers Centres that offer full integration. In one Local Authority area, where we have YP Centres funded by the LA, this has caused more of an issue but adults have used these centres or we see them elsewhere.'*

## 11 Key factors which would have a positive impact on JCP referrals, improving these for client benefits

11.1 Overwhelmingly, CE members urge that DBIS, SFA and DWP take steps at national level to ensure that JCP sees Next Step providers as equal partners.

11.2 Where JCP staff promote the benefits of Next Step support, attendance has increased. The process is improved where JCP staff observe Next Step sessions. One CE member has invested in an engagement team which promotes the Next Step service to key partners and agencies and reports that it is constantly looking at how to fill any gaps in service delivery.

11.3 Members suggest that a shared CRM system would improve client care significantly, obviating the need for them to repeat their information and needs twice in quick succession. Whilst a shared CRM may not be feasible, sharing data is certainly both possible and highly desirable. The evidence is that where skills action plans have been shared, it has had a positive effect on JCP referrals to the Next Step service for the benefit of the client.

11.4 Members also suggest that communicating good practice between JCP areas would be helpful.

11.5 Close monitoring of clients failing to attend Next Step sessions has proved beneficial in at least one area. One view was that all customers accessing JCP should be mandated to Next Step. The initial expectation that Skills Conditionality would do this has had quite the opposite effect.

11.6 Mandating clients to attend Next Step has had a mixed success and needs to be explored further and in detail: *'Good JCP Advisers will promote the positive benefits of IAG to their customers and this is essential for mandated interviews. A significant proportion of JCP customers can present as being hostile/resistant to guidance if mandated or where they feel coerced'*.

- 11.7 Ensuring NCS attendance at Jobcentres on a full-time or at least a regular basis would enhance its status with Jobcentre staff.
- 11.8 JCP staff confidence in NCS staff can be enhanced through delivering sessions to target groups, such as women returners, those transferring from Employment Support Allowance to Job Seekers Allowance, occupational groups and CV workshops.
- 11.9 Suggested improvements include:
- 11.9.1 *'The sharing of client skills action plans at JCP has had a positive impact on JCP referrals. The fact that JCP staff can see the benefits of the Next Step input on clients has helped with increased referrals. This in turn, has helped with including JCP staff in consolidating joint objectives and outcomes, with JCP staff observing Next Step input will, lead to JCP output. Local success has then been communicated from one JCP district to another. Conditionality has had some effect of referrals but not consistently increasing referrals as you would expect. The close monitoring of DNA/FTSs in JCP has helped with the increase in client referrals.'*
  - 11.9.2 *'We have maximised numbers of referrals by working closely with JCP Management, information briefings to JCP Advisers as well as taking part in registrations groups at JCP. We have also delivered bespoke workshops to target audiences e.g. those transferring from ESA to JSA, women returners, occupational groups and CV workshops.'*
  - 11.9.3 *'JCP referrals increase when JCP advisers understand the benefit of the service on offer to their clients. We work hard to keep local staff up-to-date and to offer a menu of services that are tailored to the needs of their clients. We also offer a 5 day a week service to as many JCP sites as practically possible to ensure consistency of offer.'*
  - 11.9.4 *'Firstly, a 'buy in' to our Service from JC staff at all levels from managers to front line staff. There needs to be a more equal relationship, rather than us having to go 'cap in hand' in order to get free access to their premises. All their staff need to understand & value our services, so that they proactively market the provision to their customers.'*
  - 11.9.5 *'Currently we are only co-located at JCs on a part-time basis, & we think that if this was full time that their staff's commitment would be greater, which would lead to increased referrals.'*

- 11.9.6 *'Training of JCP staff to refer effectively and understand the service.'*
- 11.9.7 *'A shared CRM system that would not only prevent customers having to "re-tell their stories" but would allow JCP and NS advisers to monitor customers and build a joint support programme.'*
- 11.9.8 *'Shared information and training update sessions regarding LMI, government objectives and funding support.'*
- 11.9.9 *'That all customers accessing JCP were mandated to Next Step. The initial expectation that Skills Conditionality would do this has had quite the opposite effect.'*
- 11.9.10 *'We are in the process of developing a community approach to encourage non JCP claimants to access the service and as part of the [co-location pilot in our area have] been in communication with other organisations engaging with customers in the area'.*

## **12 Plans to support requests for face to face support from any young people who are not eligible for this**

- 12.1 The current position varies according to local conditions. However, all CE members reported that they provide a positive response, even if only to signpost to other services via Connexions, providing literature web links, diagnostic tools. Information for young people is prominently displayed including Apprenticeships. Other WBL/training providers are being invited to provide information on their services for NEETs.
- 12.2 At least one member is holding discussions with the LA Young People's Service and local representative bodies.
- 12.3 Referrals for specialist support, for housing, or substance abuse for example, are made to colleagues or other agencies according to local arrangements. One member is now keeping a record of those who exceed their entitlement to Next Step support.
- 12.4 Another commented that it was hoping to offer a limited service to young people as part of the Community Walk-in bids: *'Connexions will provide literature, website links, I.T. packages, diagnostic tools and staff and all referrals for this age group will be referred to the local authority funded Connexions service. We will ensure that information relating to its' Apprenticeship scheme is prominently displayed, and other Training Providers will be invited to supply literature for display on their alternative services for young people, with a particular focus on targeting and promoting their services to NEETs. In conjunction with Connexions, we will ensure that all promotional*

*materials are appropriate for the age range and we will run a local awareness campaign to promote the service.'*

12.5 A further member advised that: *'...as our company is still offering a service for young people we will refer to our colleagues or to another agency if the customer needs specialist support; e.g. with housing, or substance abuse. Also with regards to those who are eligible for Next Step but have exceeded their entitlement, we do currently record those who exceed their entitlement for F2F delivery, including those mandated by JCP'*

12.6 A member with extensive links with schools including a careers education and guidance consultancy service, careers fairs, Diploma support and Applied Learning is looking to build on this support and either to provide face to face support via a costed service or an alternative.

### **13 Examples of good, or not so good, links with local authority services for young people and/or with community school**

13.1 One member has been proactively been working with both LA and community schools to support CEIAG services for young people. It currently works actively with over 210 schools across its areas. Another has to cover 30 community schools where it either uses their computer suites for community activity such as Next Step Career Health Check or delivered face to face sessions with parents.

13.2 In another case, Next Step is promoted at school parents' evenings and links are being forged with children's' centres in anticipation of the forthcoming NCS Pathfinder programme. In that area, there are currently limited links to local authorities while they determine what they intend to establish as their offer to young people. However, the more common position is that CE members have strong links with their local authorities and intend to continue to do so, extending to sub-contracting some delivery to local authorities.

13.3 One member reported that it has delivered Next Step Advice sessions in two local schools with a Sixth Form, whereas another has little involvement with Community Schools in areas where it does not hold the Connexions contract.

13.4 Another reported that: *'We try to promote Next Step and in future NCS at parents' events..... also developing links in Children's Centres...most of this will come through the NCS Pathfinder work as it rolls out.'*

## 14 How CE members plan to resource the cost of training frontline staff to provide and monitor a triage service

- 14.1 Plans are tentative at this stage, depending on local structures. As one member put it: *'This will depend on the model that is finally agreed regarding delivery of service, triage requirements and range of customer support (All age or signposting delivery to youth/ adult service provision), how much time to train staff will be given, what funded support will be made available for training staff from SFA and Prime contract holders to support development.'*
- 14.2 Another member commented that: *'The triage system it would need to be funded in terms of delivery venues, staffing, ICT and mobile costs etc. This is quite difficult to ascertain as demand is unpredictable between delivery venues.'*
- 14.3 Some are waiting for the outcome of the Community Walk-in bid as a budget was proposed to train frontline staff to deliver the triage service. In one case an online training budget is proposed. It is anticipated that the triage service will work with the client group in providing the level of service and referral needed.
- 14.4 Another member, with its own training division, would prefer to run this training themselves for organisations whose staff do not already hold IAG qualifications, and/or have relevant skills & experience: *'If the National Careers Service/Next Step funded and /or organised this training our concern would be that partners would be required to meet certain requirements that might be onerous, & discourage them from engaging in co-location'*.
- 14.5 In another case: *'...we run 4 Next Step branded premises', each has a Customer Service Officer that supports front line delivery. The cost of training will be supported through our "normal" training budget'*. That provider does not envisage *'Next Step advisers taking on a triage role'*.

## 15 Examples of joint staff training with partners, work-shadowing et al which have positive effects on partnership working as well as co-location

- 15.1 All CE members have substantial training capacity and expertise and take a prominent stance in their networks.
- 15.2 For example one, as an accredited NVQ Centre, advised that it will: *'...continue to successfully deliver IAG/Customer Care programmes to variety of partners and staffing in F.E. colleges'*.

- 15.3 Another has *'...an established history of joint staff training with partners, particularly at a local level with adviser teams. Many of our partners are also sub-contractors for Next Step or have worked with us on other contract e.g. Probation Service, FE/HE, Adult Education, Training Providers, Local Authority. Joint training topics have covered areas such as LMI, Action Planning, and Working with vulnerable clients, referral processes and updates on each other's area of work.'*
- 15.4 In another area collaboration extends to offering *'...funded places at a number of our training sessions to Partners, for example recently we have offered places at Advanced Interviewing Training which was conducted for us by [a local] University and also places on Effective Observation Practices' which was run by Ofsted Inspectors.'*
- 15.5 The same organisation runs *'...a Next Step/IAG Network for the organisations involved in IAG, which holds well attended, regular meetings with speakers. On occasions we have managed to hold joint events with JC+ advisors, but given the exigencies of time it is not easy for JC staff to get released.'*
- 15.6 These networks are very well established. As exemplified by this member's comment: *'We have a number of co-location working partnerships and models that cover both youth and adult delivery services. These have been established over time and developing a clear understanding of the support needs of the customers we are working with. Presentations and joint exploration sessions regarding targets, eligibility, services and deliver outcomes have all aided the development of close links between different professional communities. When JCP have been unable to offer a co-location venue we have invited JCP to share our delivery locations in order to ensure quality and range of support services to our customers.'*
- 15.7 In at least one further case, Next Step and the Probation Trust have delivered joint training on risk/disclosure. This was then rolled out to wider offender teams working with this customer group.
- 15.8 In the deepening co-location pilots, joint training with JCP has taken place and work shadowing is planned and Next Step Adviser and Information Adviser have undertaken JCP Inductions as part of the Pilot. *'In addition Next Step advisers working in the community have undertaken short one day training courses in mental health and domestic violence this has proved invaluable in order for staff to share and exchange ideas on how best to support customer....Next step delivered some training on the 'offer' to JCP advisors, this training also combined aspects of new JCP*

*initiatives.....therefore JCP and Next Step were able to ensure training was integrated and worthwhile.'*

## 16 Key strategic changes required to make co-location more effective on the ground

- 16.1 The themes in this report are strong. Co-location is a well understood concept by Careers England members building on support for disadvantaged people and isolated rural communities. There is a significant amount of good and best practice to draw on.
- 16.2 Amongst the major challenges now is to establish co-location within Jobcentres on an equal partnership basis. This will not always with be easy with the resource and demand pressures that bear on JCP. It is clear that there are already examples of good practice that need to be reflected in strategic changes to enable Next Step to maximise the contribution that claimants make to their own and the economy's success.
- 16.3 The consensus of Careers England members is that:
- 16.3.1 The Next Step offer has to be an integral element of the JCP customer offer.
  - 16.3.2 Shared targets and key performance indicators commensurate with achieving a coherent service with sufficient flexibility to allow for local conditions. This may need some rigorous discussion given the developmental basis of career guidance. Next Step should be embedded into JCP customer support. This will enable early career/job searching support/interventions that will help customers to move forward at an earlier stage and before despondency sets in and they lose their job readiness skills and confidence.
  - 16.3.3 Funding streams need to be aligned so that they support the creation of a coherent, co-located service.
  - 16.3.4 Data sharing and customer relationship management systems need to include Next Step as an equal partner. There should be a shared CRM system so JCP and Next Step can share customer information, build and provide a robust provision of support that is geared to early job re-entry based on good LMI and work skills support. If this is not possible, then data sharing must happen. In this way the customer will not have to keep '*re-telling their story*' and both agencies will be displaying '*joined up thinking with regards to government/customer objectives*'.

- 16.3.5 There has to be comprehensive training of JCP and partners' staff on the aim and scope of all channels of the Next Step Service and effective local processes adopted by JCP Advisers in managing their caseloads and referrals to Next Step Advisers.
- 16.3.6 Greater resource availability and access to reliable IT systems and appropriate interview facilities to support Next Step Advisers to deliver a professional service.
- 16.3.7 Changes to the funding of interventions with customers in rural locations as these are suffering from the current drive to maximise numbers primarily through JCP.

## 17 Conclusions

- 17.1 Members are clear that, for co-location to work, the NCS will have to be fully embedded in the host agency's offer. As one commented: *'What does not work is where we are asked to piggy back on events i.e. Stay & Play at Children's Centres where the participants are not ready/engaged/prepared for Next Step or where outreach market places of provision are set up and there is little space/facilities for one-to-one delivery and footfall is uncertain/beyond our control. In short the current Next Step model does not fund outreach/awareness raising.'*
- 17.2 Effective co-location requires key elements in place as illustrated here: *'[The service] has been enhanced where information is shared between us and the partner organisation to look at the needs of the customer, with the impetus being on supporting the customer through their journey. Where consideration is given to planning sessions to ensure that customers can attend at appropriate times to facilitate any childcare commitments, additional needs or any other considerations, this has led to the sessions being well attended and this often results in positive feedback. This has been particularly positive in partnership with Third Sector organisations and those working to meet the needs of their community.'*
  - 17.2.1 A common theme was captured by this comment: *'Co-location works when the benefits to each organisation i.e. Next Step and host are mutual and where there is a shared understanding of the needs of the customers and the scope of the service.'*

17.2.2 Funding pressures amongst some partners need to be addressed, including rents being charged at market rates - which is bound to continue and even to increase.

### 17.3 Providing access to all 3 NCS Channels

There is some notable good practice emerging in this area, for example:

17.3.1 information assistants have been employed to direct clients to the other two channels.

17.3.2 an apprentice has been employed in the information role.

17.3.3 in two trial sites, dedicated phones have been provided for clients to use to contact the helpline.

17.3.4 in other sites, the details of the other channels have been added to the client skills action plan.

17.3.5 in another case, information on the other two channels is included in a leaflet given out at first claim stage and personal advisers encouraged to provide information orally.

## 18 Closing statement

This survey and report has identified a significant amount of good practice and challenges for NCS co-location in a wide range of agencies and JCP in particular. We trust that this report will assist the Government's drive to create a coherent NCS service delivered through the active involvement of Jobcentre Plus, FE colleges and other agencies with NCS prime contractors and their networks of sub-contractors across England.

**Prepared by Leigh Henderson, NICEC Fellow and Associate of Careers England**

**CoHesion Career Development Consultancy**

**{With support from Paul Chubb and the full CE Adults Task Group}**

**For Careers England, February 2012**

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# ADULTS TASK GROUP

## Consultation questions: RESEARCH PROJECT

### Re: Co-location, Next Step and the National Careers Service

#### Background:

This research stems from the attached paper from the SFA presented to the NCS Advisory Group on 13.12.11. After which, Paul Chubb reported to the CE Board 14.12 and the Board resolved that the Adults TG should be invited to gather evidence from CE Members (as Prime as well as Sub Contractors).

This was discussed in depth by the ATG at its meeting in Leeds on 16.12.11, and (under the leadership of Linda Gilleard) we have put together the following set of questions.

Our aim is to gain an informed view on co-location from Members of “what is working well, and why?”, “what is not working so well and why?”, and “what should we be seeking to happen to make co-location activity work better for the clients we serve?”

The evidence gathered will be summarised and anonymity preserved in the usual CE way. A REPORT will be published by CE and submitted to the SFA, to DBIS and to the NCS AG. The timetable will require us to gather evidence by Friday 13.1.12 at the latest.

Leigh Henderson will undertake the analysis and report drafting, with Paul Chubb acting as project manager in order to offer a ‘headline interim summary’ to the NCS AG on 24.1.12 and to submit the full Report to Adam Micklethwaite at DBIS in Sheffield on 31.1.2012 when he hosts a meeting of the Adults TG that day (Verity Bullough of the SFA may be attending too).

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP.**

**PLEASE RETURN YOUR RESPONSES BY 0900 on Friday 13.1.2012 to [leighhen@googlemail.com](mailto:leighhen@googlemail.com)**

**With a copy to**

**[paul.chubb@careersengland.org.uk](mailto:paul.chubb@careersengland.org.uk)**

In respect of co-location, please read the SFA report attached. Then please can you assist us by offering your informed views on “what is working well, and why?”, “what is not working so well and why?”, and “what should we be seeking to happen to make co-location activity work better for the clients we serve?”

Please bear these three key elements in mind as you answer the following questions as fully as possible.  
THANK YOU.

1. Which co-location models work best and with which agencies?
2. Can you highlight any examples of where things work well, detailing the factors/actions that make this happen (please specify by organisation category e.g. JCP, Library, F.E. College, WBL Provider et al)?
3. Can you offer any non-typical co-location example(s) which works well?
4. Can you offer details of any rural outreach which works well?
5. Can you offer details of any particular concerns that inhibit effective co-location?
6. How are you measuring the impact of co-location on client progression?
7. How do you enhance the service in JCP premises to provide clients with the time and access to all 3 channels?
8. How do you integrate and co-locate separately funded services/offers for adults and young people?
9. What key factors would have a positive impact on JCP referrals improving these for client benefits?
10. How do you (as Next Step/NCS) plan to support requests for face to face support from any young people who are not eligible for this?
11. Can you offer any examples of good, or not so good, links with Local Authority services for young people and/or with Community Schools?
12. How do you plan to resource the cost of training frontline staff to provide and monitor a triage service?
13. And can you offer any examples of joint staff training with partners, work-shadowing et al which have positive effects on partnership working as well as co-location?
14. What are the 3 key strategic changes required to make co-location more effective on the ground?